

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8435
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7495

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PORG PK
SUBJ: MINSTATE FOR FON AFFAIRS AGHA SHAHI POSTPONES TRIP TO UN

1. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AGHA SHAHI HAD TITLE OF "ADVISER" FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THEN EQUIVALENT TO MINISTERIAL RANK. WHEN GEN. ZIA FORMED THE NEW MINISTERIAL GOVERNMENT JULY 5, SOME CIVIL SERVANTS WHO HAD BEEN ADVISERS WERE MADE MINISTERS, BUT AGHA SHAHI WAS ONLY NAMED MINISTER OF STATE. WE ARE RELIABLY INFORMED THAT HE REFUSED FOR MANY DAYS TO BE SWORN IN TO THAT RANK, TRYING TO HOLD OUT FOR A MINISTERIAL TITLE, FAILING WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD PREFER TO GO ABROAD AS AN AMBASSADOR. THE GOP APPARENTLY TOLD HIM THAT THE ONLY POSSIBLE AMBASSADORIAL JOB WAS IN MOSCOW, WHEREUPON AGHA SHAHI AGREED TO BE SWORN IN AS MINSTATE. HE WENT TO BELGRADE NONALIGNED MEETING JULY 22 TO 26 AND FROM THERE TO MOSCOW TO PARTICIPATE IN ECONOMIC MINISTER GHULAM ISHAQ'S DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVS JULY 23 TO 29. HE RETURNED TO PAKISTAN WITH THE ISHAQ GROUP, AND TRIED TO GET PERMISSION TO GO TO THE UN TO ATTEND SCHEDULED SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION OF WHICH HE IS AN ELECTED MEMBER. HE PURSUED CMLA GEN ZIA TO KARACHI, WE HEAR, PERSONALLY TO ASK FOR APPROVAL TO LEAVE FOR THE UN, BUT WAS APPARENTLY DENIED. TODAY WE WERE TOLD THAT SHAHI WILL BE STAYING IN ISLAMABAD "FOR SOME TIME".

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2. COMMENT: GEN ZIA IS STILL NEGOTIATING WITH POLITICAL PARTIES TO GET ADDITIONAL LEADERS TO JOIN HIS GOVT AND PRESUMABLY WANTS TO HOLD OUT THE JOB OF FOREIGN MINISTER AS AN INDUCEMENT. IN ADDITION, AGHA SHAHI IS NOT HIGHLY REGARDED BY THE MILITARY (OR BY SOME OF HIS OWN MFA SUBORDINATES) AND FOR MANY MONTHS WE HAVE HEARD RUMORS THAT HE WOULD BE REPLACED. THERE IS RESENTMENT THAT

SHAHI LIKES TO BE ABROAD, PARTICULARLY IN HIS OLD HAUNTS IN NEW YORK, WHEN HARD PROBLEMS AND POLITICAL ISSUES COME TO THE FORE IN PAKISTAN. HE IS, HOWEVER, A HIGHLY COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL WITH LONG AND CLOSE BACKGROUND IN PAK FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROBLEMS. HE IS ONE OF THE HARDEST-LINERS ON THE SUBJECT OF PAK NEEDS FOR NUCLEAR REPROCESSING, AND IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT GEN ZIA WANTS SHAHI TO REMAIN IN ISLAMABAD AS A VALUABLE RESOURCE ON THAT SUBJECT, AMONG OTHERS.

HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

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